
BEYOND BOP DRUMMING

JOHN RILEY



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About the Author

John began playing drums at age eight, after receiving a snare drum as a gift. With the support, encouragement and patience of his parents, John and Mary Ann, he played in the school band and began drum lessons with a good local teacher, Tom Sicola. While under Tom's guidance, he gained control of the snare drum through work on the rudiments and reading. Eventually, he acquired a complete drumset and the lessons expanded to include "beats of the day," coordination and reading studies for the drumset. At age twelve, John began playing in rock bands and heard his first jazz recordings, the soundtrack to *The Gene Krupa Story* and Max Roach's *Conversation*. Two years later, he played his first "professional" gig, which he obtained through an audition played over the telephone. John began studying with Joe Morello in 1971, after meeting him at a drum symposium. John went on to attend the University of North Texas, where he was introduced to a larger world of music and percussion. While at UNT, he played in, toured and recorded with the famed One o'clock Lab Band. In 1976, he moved to New York City and was soon called to join the Woody Herman Band. Following that great experience, John returned to New York and began freelancing with a wide spectrum of world class musicians including Stan Getz, Milt Jackson, Miles Davis, Dizzy Gillespie, John Scofield, Bob Mintzer, Gary Peacock, Mike Stern, Joe Lovano, the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra, the Carnegie Hall Jazz Band, John Patitucci, Bob Berg and many others.

John has a Bachelor of Music degree in jazz education from the University of North Texas and a Master of Music in jazz studies from Manhattan School of Music. He is on the faculty of Manhattan School of Music, The New School and William Paterson College, is the author of *The Art of Bop Drumming* and has taught master classes around the world.

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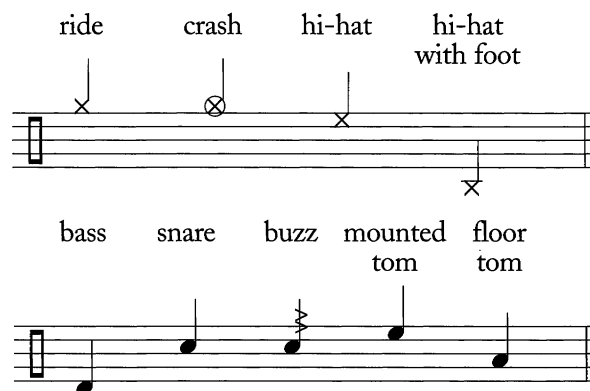
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Key



Introduction:

Elvin, Tony, Jack... Whoa!! What's **this** all about?

My previous book, *The Art of Bop Drumming*, is a primer on good musicianship at the drumset. This book will expand those ideas and explore the innovations of the fertile 1960s musical environment and beyond.

Drummers Elvin Jones, Paul Motian, Ed Blackwell, Tony Williams and Jack DeJohnette, each members of ground-breaking bands, changed the sound, shape and feeling of music. Their playing elevated the position of the drummer to that of the leader of the rhythm section and the emotional energy center of the band. At times, they boldly directed the musical flow as if they were co-soloists in the ensemble. Without the musical contributions of these men, we would not hear or play music the way we do today. Their playing, rooted in the already considerably sophisticated be-bop conventions, continues to project the future of drumming. All of today's leading players have been greatly influenced by, and continue to draw inspiration from, these musical innovators. This is the jazz music that first captivated and excited me, and I offer this book as a tribute to all of the musicians cited within, for they represent, to me, the apex of creative music in the 20th century.

"Beyond Bop," then, is designed to help open these musical frontiers and expand your musical consciousness. This collection of tried and true ideas will show you the how and why of this new, more assertive drumming which grew out of the be-bop style. My hope is that *The Art of Bop Drumming* and this book will serve as gateways through which future generations of musicians will be introduced to, and challenged and inspired by, the lofty musical standards illustrated herein. This material is going to take some effort to assimilate but it will lead to an increased skill level, vocabulary and understanding of rhythm and music. Open your ears and get busy!

John Riley

*"If you have a drum set in the room and the postman walks in, he'll sit down and go 'dat, dat, dat, do, do, do, buzz, buzz, bam, boom, boom.' Anybody can do that and keep a beat. If you're really serious about drumming, don't you think that there's more to it than that? There's a technique that really takes concentration, work, dedication, discipline and time... I've always been a student; I've always been studying, constantly. Learning has always been exciting for me. I'm always learning something."*¹

— Tony Williams

Chapter 1: Time Playing

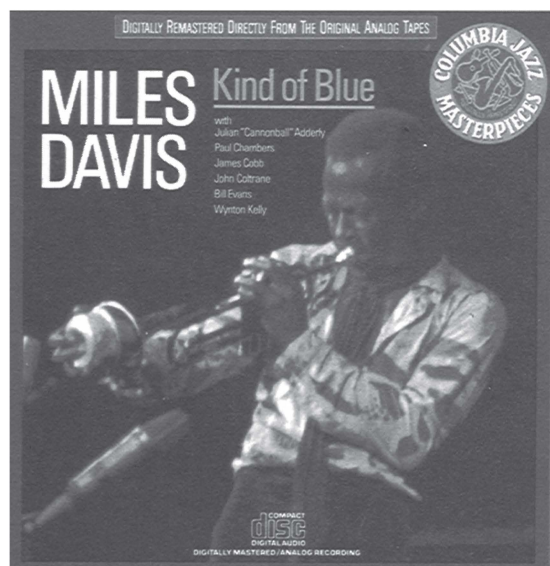
Music's evolution, like that of art, language and architecture, occurs in stages. By the late 1950s the winds of change were blowing strongly. The fifteen-year run of the be-bop ideal — a soloist playing over complex harmonic cycles with rhythm section accompaniment — was beginning to seem too restrained for some musicians. Those that would lead the way into the next phase were looking for a more “open” format.

By 1960 most of the key players of the “new thing” were indicating their direction. Saxophonist John Coltrane recorded his ultimate tribute to the harmonic challenges of be-bop, *Giant Steps*, in 1959 and began to investigate looser structures. Miles Davis' influential recording, *Kind of Blue*, also recorded in '59, included Coltrane, pianist Bill Evans and drummer Jimmy Cobb. It was one of the first recordings to explore a more relaxed way of organizing music, incorporating phrases as long as 16 measures in one tonal mode. These longer phrases allowed the rhythm section players and the soloists a natural opportunity for interaction because they

all were less encumbered by “the changes.” This new musical freedom made the soloists more open to playing off ideas introduced by the rhythm section. At the same time, Ornette Coleman was developing the concept of playing melodic themes followed by collective group improvisation based solely on the mood, spirit, and vocabulary of the melody without any real attachment to a specific key center or even a sense of bar lines. Concurrently, the Bill Evans Trio probed a new notion of playing in which the bass player and drummer became equal participants with Bill in shaping the music. As a result of the introduction of these conceptual changes, and with the increased use of amplification for the other instruments, drummers were being given both greater latitude and a larger responsibility for each ensemble's sound and direction.

To help better understand the “post-bop” concept, let's first take a look at the playing of two accomplished “bop” players who evolved into influential transitional players — Roy Haynes, who's been called “the father of modern drumming” and still sounds fresh today, and Mel Lewis, who has been credited with introducing the important idea of the “open beat.” Roy, nicknamed “snap, crackle, pop” because of his sound and phrasing, played mostly in small groups using high-pitched drums and a very crisp sound. Mel, nicknamed “tailor” because of his ability to “make all of the pieces fit,” is best known for playing in big bands using low-pitched drums and a loose sound. However, both were among the first to widely exploit the “broken-time feel” which was to become commonplace in the 1960s.

The standard “bop” time feeling is a steady, repetitive ride cymbal pattern with the bass drum underneath and the hi-hat on beats 2 and 4. The accents being played really stand out above the dynamically flat time line. The broken-time feel mixes repetitive with non-repetitive cymbal patterns over “2 and 4” or some varied rhythms on the hi-hat. The bass drum most often follows the cymbal line or plays counterpoint. Snare drum rhythms are woven into the time flow in a smooth fashion. By employing broken-time, these men in essence “told” their band mates that each player in the ensemble was responsible for keeping his own time and, as drummers they weren't going to “baby sit” — playing straight time — at the expense of creating good new music.



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Broken-time

Here is an example of Mel Lewis' broken-time playing as heard on *Art Pepper + Eleven*:



Notice that, although the cymbal pattern is irregular, the time still has forward motion because the snare and bass drum parts complete the groove. In this example, Mel's playing clearly demonstrates a concept that was later fully developed by Elvin Jones, Tony Williams and Jack DeJohnette; the drumset should be thought of as *one* instrument, not a collection of separate instruments. The sound and groove are created by ideas played on the entire instrument, not just the ride cymbal and hi-hat. This type of time playing is less insistent than the traditional straight cymbal pattern and gives the music a smoother flow, thus the characterization "open."



Prestige OJCCD-196-2



Now, check out a brief example of Roy Haynes' time playing as heard on *We Three*:



Roy stretches out even further by using the hi-hat effectively as yet another contrapuntal voice.

The work of Roy and Mel continues to be just as inspiring today as it was in the '50s and early '60s. Their conceptual innovations, along with those of many others, helped to set the stage for the dynamic musical changes we're about to explore.

As the '60s began, band leaders were asking for and expecting more from their drummers; the music's slower-moving harmonic rhythm created a fresh environment and presented opportunities for collective interaction that had been inconceivable just a few years earlier. As a result, drummers had to become both more complete and more imaginative as musicians because, over and above all their traditional functions, they now found themselves with the substantial, additional responsibility of creating new sonic milieus for the new music to work.

"It is one instrument, and I would hasten to say that I take that single idea as the basis for my whole approach to the drums."³

— Elvin Jones